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INFO RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 4555  
RUEHZN/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3320  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5867  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1411  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0892  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0356  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 1596  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP//  
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000409

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED, OGAC  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)  
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO OGHA  
    (WSTIEGER/LVALDEZ/CHICKEY/DMILLER) AND  
    FIC/NIH (RGLASS) AND DIV-FLU (COX/MOHEN)  
USAID FOR ANE (CJENNINGS, MWARD) AND GH (KYAMASHITA, KHILL)  
CDC FOR COGH (SBLOUNT), CCID (SREDD) AND GAP (BIRX, SIMONDS)  
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC (MALISON), USAID (MACARTHUR/MBRADY/CBOWES)  
BANGKOK FOR APHIS (NCARDENAS), REO (JWALLER)  
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE (BROSS)  
PHNOM PENH FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR(BBRADY)  
ROME FOR FAO  
VIENTIANE FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR (ACORWIN)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [KFLU](#) [VM](#)  
SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HEALTH CONFIRMS H5N1 RISK FROM  
CHICKENS SMUGGLED FROM CHINA

REF: A) HANOI 398 B) HANOI 90 C) 06 HANOI 630

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11. (SBU) Summary: The Vietnamese Department of Animal Health (DAH) confirmed that chicken and cattle smuggled into Vietnam from Guangxi province in China have tested positive for Avian Influenza (chickens) and Foot and Mouth disease (cattle). Many of these animals are destined for sale throughout northern Vietnam. Government of Vietnam (GVN) detection and prevention efforts have limited the scope of smuggled animals, but can only reduce, not eliminate, the threat of the spread of disease. While Chinese officials have not reacted well when Vietnam previously announced infection in smuggled animals, the two countries informally cooperate and China is developing a joint initiative focusing on AI prevention. End Summary.

DAH Confirms Avian Influenza in Smuggled Chickens  
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12. (SBU) Do Huu Dung, veterinary epidemiologist in the DAH within the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD),

recently informed ESTH staff that DAH testing of samples taken from smuggled chickens confiscated in Lang Son and Quang Ninh provinces along the northern border with China confirmed that the birds carried avian influenza. Though Dung noted that the DAH numbers did not exactly match those recently provided by Lang Son officials (ref A), he stated that DAH has seen a recent increase in positive tests.

13. (SBU) As part of the centralized Vietnamese testing program, DAH experts trained in the United States to use U.S.-produced advanced diagnostic gene sequencing machines, analyzed swabs taken from chickens confiscated in Lang Son. DAH found evidence that the birds carried the virus. Dung discounted the possibility that the test merely picked up AI virus gene sequences in the birds from Chinese vaccination campaigns and stated that the tests detected the virus itself. DAH commenced the testing program in 2007 with funding from the Japanese Trust Fund. The number of tests in a year depends upon the amount of smuggled chickens and the available funding. DAH uses test results to highlight the health impacts of chicken smuggling and to push provincial market control authorities to increase their surveillance and interdiction efforts.

#### Lang Son and Quang Ninh Primary Smuggling Routes

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14. (SBU) Located across the border from Chinese egg raising centers in Guangxi province, Dung stated that Lang Son was the primary conduit for smuggled chickens entering the Vietnamese market, particularly older laying hens ("spent hens") no longer viable as egg producers. Smugglers also transport birds from Guangxi into Quang Ninh province near the border gate at Mong Cai, before moving them to markets in Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, and Hanoi. According to press reports this week, traffic officials in Quang Ninh just confiscated two tons of chicken and nearly 40,000 eggs, adding to the already more than 60 tons of birds seized in the province in the

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first three months of 2008. Despite these large numbers, however, Dung reported more cattle smuggling at Mong Cai than poultry smuggling. Other Vietnamese border provinces, which abut Yunnan province, see little illicit bird commerce as Yunnan has few commercial poultry and egg farms. Cambodia and Laos do not export poultry (legally or otherwise) to Vietnam.

#### Vietnam-China Cooperation

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15. (SBU) Dung noted little formal cooperation with China to halt chicken smuggling, though the Chinese are planning a joint AI prevention initiative. In the past, Chinese authorities responded to Vietnamese announcements of positive tests in smuggled birds by accusing the Vietnamese of "making excuses for a domestic problem." Stung by this, and sensitive to relations with China, DAH no longer focuses on the origins of smuggled birds. At the same time, Vietnam and China informally share information and occasionally cooperate as part of multilateral AI preventative efforts through ASEAN plus 3 or ASEAN plus China. This might be changing as Dung noted that the Chinese government recently invited him to Beijing to participate in China's national AI policy review -- the first time Vietnam has been asked to attend an internal Chinese policy process.

16. (SBU) China recently floated a proposal for additional bilateral cooperation with Vietnam on AI prevention. Dung stated that Vietnam is interested, though it expects some political maneuvering before the two parties reach agreement. According to Dung, the Chinese suggested that the provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi implement the project with the GVN. Vietnam, slightly miffed at the Chinese presumption that Chinese provinces should implement projects with Vietnam's central government, intends to recommend that Quang Ninh and Lang Son provinces partner with their Chinese counterparts. In any event, according to Dung, authorities from both the Chinese and Vietnamese governments would attend any signing ceremony and end up coordinating any joint efforts.

#### Cattle Smuggling and Foot and Mouth Concerns

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17. (SBU) Though Dung noted continued bird smuggling into Quang Ninh, he stated that the bigger issue was the illicit cattle trade near the border gate at Mong Cai. DAH continues to find evidence of foot and mouth disease in smuggled cattle, though the number of positive tests has decreased somewhat from 2006. Typically, smugglers bring the animals across the border and graze them with local residents for a few months to "naturalize" the cattle as Vietnamese in order to obtain health certificates to transport into other provinces. The GVN has spent USD 25 million on protection and control of foot and mouth disease over the past five years. Vietnam and China cooperate on a program for cattle and pigs under the OIE Southeast Asia Foot and Mouth Disease Campaign coordinated in Bangkok through ASEAN with Australian assistance funding.

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